

**Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey**  
**Graduate School of Education**  
Decision Analysis I – Fall 2010  
Assignment #1

**Assignment 1: Using Indicators, Rankings and Ratios to evaluate and inform the use of charter schools in New Jersey**

**Context**

One controversial topic in current public education is charter school expansion. Although New Jersey has relatively fewer charter schools than other states (USDOE, 2010), Governor Chris Christie has proposed adding more charter schools because, “charter schools play a crucial role in proving districts don’t need to be heavily subsidized by the state to provide quality education for their students” (Christie, March 18, 2010). While receiving public funding, charter schools are not bound to all of the rules, regulations or laws that public schools must follow. Usually, charter schools have a specialized curriculum and are attended through choice (admission through lottery systems).

One of the most attractive components of charter schools is that they secure private funding and may be cheaper to run than public schools, as well as less reliant on public tax dollars to run. Many charter schools do not fall under collective bargaining agreements and have less bureaucracy associated with functions. Overall, charter schools seem appealing.

**Assignment**

Using your group’s assigned grade level, evaluate the state of NJ Charter schools. Then, prepare a policy brief on the topic.

**Procedures**

Use each of the following tools -indicators, ranks and ratios- to review the data and conduct your analysis of NJ charter schools.

Utilize all of the following subgroups to analyze your data

- Total Population
- Special Education
- ELL
- Economically Disadvantaged

\*\*\*You can use either district level data or school level data

\*\*\*You may use other data outside of the NJDOE assessment database to support your analysis

## **Policy Brief Instructions**

You will be preparing what is referred to as a “Data Driven Policy Brief” in Chapter 2 of the text. You will be applying the data analysis tools of chapters 3 – 5 – developing and/or using existing indicators, ratios and descriptive statistics to make your case. We will not, in this assignment be looking at “relationships” among variables – not yet, that is. You are expected to have a complete analysis and prescribe recommendations within your work. That is, if you believe that charter schools outperform or under perform as compared to public schools, you will provide next steps/implications for practice or policy to be completed in your policy brief.

### **Specifics**

- 1) You will only hand in your Policy Brief – Max 5 pages
- 2) Use the model for data-driven policy brief in Baker & Richards (2004) to guide your writing
- 3) Use PowerPoint to present your findings to the class – all groups will present their findings in class